'Straff, aber nicht stramm—herb, aber nicht derb': Zur Vergesellschaftung uon Madchen durch den Bund Deutscher Mädel im sozialkulturellen Vergleich zweier Milieus. By Dagmar Reese. Weinheim and Basel: Beltz. 1989. 259 pp. **DM 39.**

Oral history has contributed much in recent years to debates on popular compliance and dissent in Nazi Germany, the 'modernization' and 'rationalization' of German society during the years of Nazi rule, and the legacy of the 'Third Reich' for Germany after 1945. In this fascinating study, the Berlin sociologist Dagmar Reese uses oral evidence, together with other contemporary sources, from two contrasting milieux, small-town Protestant (Minden in Westphalia) and big-city proletarian (Berlin-Wedding), to explore the impact of the Nazi drive to organize girls on the generation of women born between 1920 and 1930. Looking behind the impressive facade of the ***Bund Deutscher Madel,*** she sets out to assess its success in mobilizing girls and the limits on that success; the motives of those who joined and those who didn't; and the impact of the experience of membership on girls at the time and later.

Analysing the organization and ideology of the BDM, Reese challenges the idea that it set out merely to inculcate into girls notions of stereotypical femininity. The key to the BDM's programme, she argues, lay in assigning girls to the category of 'youth' rather than to the category of 'women'—stressing their generational rather than their gender identity. This enabled the Nazis to build on the appeal of the pre-1933 youth movement, with its ideas of youthful comradeship between the sexes and a realm of youth led by youth. Constructing young women as 'youth' also served the Nazi goal of educating individuals of both sexes who would function efficiently in the service of the state and of the modern industrial economy. The BDM's emphasis on sport, Reese argues, encapsulated this strategy. Sport for girls had a popular, 'modern' appeal; it could serve racial policy goals in promoting female health and fitness; but it represented above all the means of cultivating the model Nazi New Girl, tough, self-reliant, disciplined, pragmatic, energetic, and ready to 'muck in'. Released from family ties and stuffy bourgeois notions of what was ladylike, she would be free — to serve the state.

There was a gap, however, as Reese's local studies demonstrate, between the regime's aspirations to mobilize and mould a whole young female generation between the ages of 10 and 18, and the organizational reality. Initially, following the Nazi takeover, there was enough enthusiasm both in Minden and, rather more surprisingly, in 'red' Wedding, to bring a substantial influx of girls into the BDM. However, spontaneous enthusiasm was not sufficient to bring about total ***Erfassung***. From 1936 onwards, the Hitler Youth and BDM responded to this problem by applying more direct and systematic coercion. However, as Reese shows, coercion varied considerably in its impact according to the local context. In Minden, pressure was successfully exerted above all via the schools, with the result that after 1936 virtually all schoolgirls were members of the BDM. For them, attending BDM or ***Jungmädelbund*** meetings became simply part of the weekly routine: enjoyed by some, disliked by others, but accepted generally as unavoidable. In Berlin-Wedding, by contrast, coercion simply didn't work. Too few girls in Wedding had the social status or career ambitions to be blackmailed by the thought that non-membership might disadvantage them. Above all, the BDM in Wedding was unable to maintain the fiction of comprehensive membership which could serve in other places to isolate and intimidate non-members:

it was relatively easy, in the anonymity of the city, to escape the net, and girls knew it. In the words of one of the women interviewed by Reese, 'in Berlin war det nicht mit "müssen"'.

The value of Reese's study lies not just in its major new insights into the history of the Nazi organization of girls, but also in its contribution to the history of family life in the **1920s** and **1930s** and the light it sheds on general issues of coercion and compliance in the Third Reich. Addressing the question of the BDM's legacy, it also raises general questions concerning the modernizing impact of the Third Reich, pointing forward to the history of Germany after **1945.** Reese's project of identifying and analysing the 'BDM generation' might appear to be challenged by findings which bring out the limitations of the BDM's impact. Her conclusions, however, confront this apparent contradiction. While the BDM's impact depended vitally on the social milieu in which it was operating, it could in particular circumstances be profound and lasting: not, she suggests, in the sense of creating an explicitly ideological legacy (though one might wonder how easily such a legacy could be uncovered by oral history) but in a modernizing tendency to remove girls from the tutelage of the family and expose them as individuals, for better or worse, to the demands of the state and the public sphere.

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For the Soul of the People. Protestant Protest against Hitler. By Victoria Barnett. New **York** and Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1992. viii + 358 pp. $30.00.

This is a work of oral history based on interviews with some sixty former members of the Confessing Church, conducted in the **1980s.** It has produced some interesting reflections about the weaknesses of the Protestant opposition as well as its strengths. By the **1980s** some of those interviewed talked more freely about their failures than they would have done earlier. Their views have obviously also been coloured by their experience and changing perspectives since **1945.** Common features of the group are that they belonged to the younger generation in the **1930s,** that like most of the more radical leadership of the Confessing Church they were middle class, and that there was a high proportion of theological students, pastors, and a few ***Pastorinnen*** among them.

The subjects discussed include the major moral and political issues: euthanasia, persecution of the Jews, the war, resistance, and post-war developments in both German states. Much of this is not new and is already well-documented. What this book offers, however, is insight into the psychological strain suffered by an unusually sensitive and tough-minded group caught up in an ordeal for which they were not prepared. The overwhelming impression is of a sense of helplessness and guilt. They were a minority which felt that it lacked the broad support for effective opposition and therefore operated as a conspiracy. Even their theological training, not recognized by the official church after **1934,** became a criminal activity by a decree of Himmler's in August **1937.** Thereafter Bible study was a cat-and-mouse game with the Gestapo,